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SUBJECT: GUINEA: AFTER THE TOUMBA DIAKITE RADIO INTERVIEW,
AMNESIA, REVISIONISM, RELIEF, HOPE

Classified By: Ambassador Patricia Moller for Reason 1.4 b/d

11. (C) Summary: The December 16 radio interview with President Moussa Dadis Camara ex-confidant Lieutenant Abubakar & Toumba8 Diakite, who tried to kill Camara and then escaped, the National Committee of Inquiry,s release the same day of its report on the September 28 massacre that blames rogue elements for the killing, and the 18 December release of the Human Rights Watch (HRW) results of its own investigation into the massacre have agitated Conakry more than anything since Toumba,s December 3 attempt to kill Camara. The HRW report has Toumba actively involved in the massacre, beating and rapes on & Bloody Monday8, as the report calls it, but his shooting of Dadis Camara has made him a folk hero for many Guineans who at the least see what he did as a the way to depose Camara from power, and at the most as opening a solution to transition from military to civilian democratic rule. End summary.

12. (C) Conversations with labor, opposition and youth leaders, as well as listening to public opinion, have indicated a sense of relief at the shooting by Abubakar & Toumba8 Diakite of CNDD Chairman and President of Guinea Moussa Dadis Camara as Toumba, as he is popularly known, resisted Camara,s attempt to blame him entirely for the planning and execution of the disastrous September 28 massacre that, according to the Human Rights Report & Bloody Monday, The September 28 Massacre and Rapes by Security Forces in Guinea8, left 157 people dead and 1,400 injured and at least 63 girls and women raped.

13. (C) This relief actually turned to hope after Conakry started to talk about the 16 December 6:30 am local time interview on Radio France International with Toumba himself, on the run since he barely escaped capture after shooting Dadis Camara. In the interview, almost surreal with happy, laughing children in the background, he said that Dadis wanted & to do a total betrayal of me and a total betrayal of democracy8 by attempting to place the blame entirely on him for the massacre; that he is on the run and will not turn himself in; that he shot Dadis in the neck rather than in the head as originally reported; that & I struck people and I was struck8; and that he saved an opposition leader from death by removing him from the stadium during the mayhem.

14. (C) The Toumba interview, probably by design, overshadowed the press conference at 11:00 am that same day to present publicly the Commission of National Inquiry,s report on the massacre, which blamed rogue elements for the deaths, beatings and rapes. The presentation featured a female commission member who denied that any rapes took place because no one accepted the Commission,s invitation to present evidence that they happened.

15. (C) Then on Friday, 17 December, Human Rights Watch

issued its 107 page report, which asserted that the massacre was a premeditated and skillfully executed massive violation of human rights. The report, based on interviews and research conducted October 10-22, 2009, had little positive to say about Toumba: he led the soldiers into the stadium in which the massacre largely took place, he was there when they shot innocent people, he watched soldiers rape women and did nothing to stop it, and he led the soldiers who beat and detained opposition leaders.

¶6. (C) Until the radio interview, Toumba was a major target of vilification for the massacre. After the interview, he was seen by some Guineans as a positive figure since his attack short-circuited the impasse between Dadis, ambitions to stay in power and opposition desires to transition to democracy. That he, together with Gendarme Captain Moussa Tiegboro Camara, the Minister for Fighting Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime, gathered together opposition leaders, removed them from the stadium, and eventually took them a clinic in town for medical treatment, has only served to raise his stock among ordinary people and the opposition, even though his motives were unclear.

¶7. (C) Guineans generally appear ready not merely to excuse him for his misdeeds but to forget what he did, because he disabled what is widely regarded as a deranged and drug-addled Dadis Camara. That he has survived the almost three week manhunt before appearing on the radio and has given himself a political boost by identifying himself with &democracy⁸ further increases his currency. Yamoussa Toure, Deputy Secretary General of the National Confederation of Guinean Workers, expressed the typical national opinion, telling POLOFF on December 15 that &Guinea was saved from a civil war on December 38 and that Toumba,s act was &heroic and timely.⁸ &Toumba,s act is the gateway,⁸ he continued, &towards solving Guinea,s crisis.⁸ More prosaically, as a Forces Vives figure said, &Guineans are just happy to see Camara removed from the scene.⁸

¶8. (C) As one might imagine, the GOG is furious at the rise in Toumba,s stock, and wants to debunk it. On state-owned national television, the government called the opposition Â-hing but liars,⁸ who condemned Toumba for his involvement in what the GOG merely calls the &28 September 2009 events⁸ and now thank him for their lives.

¶9. (C) Upcoming is the release of the UN report on the events of September 28, which we hear from French Embassy sources, corresponds closely with the HRW report.

¶10. (C) Comment. Although Dadis Camara was removed from the scene violently rather than through constitutional means it will be better for Guinea if he does not return. His erratic, violent and unpredictable behavior and his similarly rapacious and unstable cronies only foretell a sad future for Guinea if they return to power. The rapidity of Toumba,s rehabilitation is likewise disturbing since he is widely held to have been behind both the December 23, 2008 coup and the September 28, 2009 stadium massacre as well. This does not augur well for either the average Guinean or the formal opposition since things that people willfully forget in desperation often come back to haunt them. An international force, probably constituted by ECOWAS, seems indisputably the best way forward. The presence of such a body to protect the peace could give Guinea the time it needs to frame a transition and move to democratic elections.

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